Thursday – WDR

Our Thursday started with different groups visiting different media companies in order to find out more about journalism and fake news.

We went to *the West German Broadcasting Station* (**WDR**) and could talk to a reporter working for *the Investigative Research Department*, whose job is to find new, hidden information and decide whether they are misleading or not. This took us to big topic: **fake news**. These depend on the interpretation of a fact (and its consequences) and pretend to be one but are actually lies. For example, during the elections in Germany, many fake news about *Angela Merkel* started circulating. However, not talking about everything that happened in a single report does not classify as fake news.

To make sure not to fall into this category, journalists usually have different sources to *compare* and *match* information to get the whole picture:

* colleagues
* serious, *trustworthy* news agencies (such as BBC)
* *direct* contact to the people involved (fake news can damage companies, people and their image)
* independent experts´ opinions

Often it´s all about trust and if a reporter is unsure, they usually wait or mention in the report that it´s not verified. Unfortunately, journalists are often in a hurry and in the first days of a big scoop the media are under pressure and feel the need to get every detail, which leads to *confusion*.

Many people use the term fake news in a wrong context and this affects the public´s perception and **trust** in journalism. One may think that *mainstream* media are influenced by the government, for example.

The journalist we had the chance to talk to told us a pretty new story about a *far-right* and racist group with a chatroom with 2000-3000 people whose goal was to create as many fake accounts as possible to spread false information in various social media sites. This shows how fake news is a way of manipulation. This also leads us to the bots, computer programs told to post specific things automatically who can´t initiate anything but just spread content and have a limited influence.

We have the task to differentiate between reality and lies *as today´s youth* and don´t let social media influence our opinion and compare facts from the different sites.

After this we had some minutes to prepare a radio show with different segments about politics and weather, sports, movies, music and celebrities as well as our group´s very own part. The most important thing was to make the show as *entertaining* as possible, with sarcasm and fun. Before wrapping up the preparation and starting recording we had a quick conference with all the teams to organize, listen and *propose ideas.*

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